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Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
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From: David B. Sanders, Ph.D.   
Director

**DCFS MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

We are exceptionally pleased to inform you that, on Tuesday, May 16, 2006 and Tuesday, May 23, 2006, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Multi-Agency Response Team (MART) is scheduled to conduct two presentations to multiple federal law enforcement agencies that are assigned to Southern California Drug Task Forces. It is anticipated that each session will include an audience of between twenty and forty federal law enforcement officers who represent the following federal agencies - Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF); Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI); Office of Homeland Security (OHS); Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and National Guard. Each of these specialized task forces, which are High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) federally funded, serve a significantly large volume of warrants throughout Los Angeles County. Their experience is the same as that of local law enforcement agencies, in that, throughout the course of their operations they encounter children at high-risk for victimization and exploitation. The creation of this training opportunity culminated from the interest that these task forces expressed stemming from the advocacy of a multitude of law enforcement agencies at all levels regarding the accomplishments of Los Angeles County's DCFS-MART.

The MART concept is the only one of its kind in the nation and places Los Angeles County in the forefront of establishing a true partnership between law enforcement and child welfare. MART responds expeditiously to warrants executed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and other independent law enforcement agencies where children are suspected to be at risk due to gang, weapons and/or other drug-related factors; and works with



community-based organizations to refer and provide appropriate services to impacted children. Additionally, the MART unit has been asked to participate in operations led by the FBI, ATF, Federal Housing and Urban Development, the City Attorney's Office and California State Parole.

DCFS established the Drug Endangered Children's (DEC) Program in late 1997, which, by late 1999, became fully operational in collaboration with the California Department of Justice – Los Angeles Inter-Agency Metropolitan Police Apprehension Crime Task Force (L.A.IMPACT), affiliated with the LASD. DEC solely rescued children from clandestine drug laboratories. However, in October 2003 and March 2004, the Board instructed DCFS to expand its working collaboration with independent law enforcement agencies in Los Angeles County, similarly to what had been established with the LASD; and directed DCFS to seek the dedication of resources necessary to establish MART. DCFS successfully implemented MART in January 2004 and is currently co-located with various law enforcement agencies throughout Los Angeles County to conduct expanded DEC specialized investigations; assist in the preparation of stronger criminal cases; and, more importantly, protect abused and neglected children through consistent, timely joint responses to at-risk children in narcotic, gang, and/or weapons-related warrant-executed investigations.

In 2004 and 2005, DCFS-MART responded to a total of 876 referrals and assessed the safety of 2,256 children. 52% of the children who were identified during the MART special operations were children under the age of 5. 43% of MART referrals were closed after a 30-day period when initial concerns that led to intervention were stabilized. 10% of MART referrals led to the development of voluntary contracts for non-court intervention. 47% of MART referrals resulted in the temporary removal and protective custody of children for Dependency Court intervention.

Achievement of improved outcomes in safety, permanency and a reduced reliance on detention requires support from and accountability of other systems. Linking child protection investigations to law enforcement at the local, state and federal levels has been critical to improving the quality of the initial information necessary to assure safety for children. DCFS is pleased to have assured child safety through the trust earned from law enforcement agencies that DCFS would neither compromise the safety of their agents nor the integrity of their investigations.

DCFS sincerely appreciates the Board's support and recognition of MART. We look forward to continued MART successes in order to assure the level of service delivery that the children and families of Los Angeles County richly deserve. For any questions, please feel free to contact me at (213) 351-5600, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:hb

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors